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Book Reviews

The Roman Republic. By W. E. HEITLAND, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. New York: Putnam; London: Cambridge University Press, 1909. 3 vols, large 8vo, pp. 355, 534, 563. \$10 net.

"Is there room for another political study of the Roman Republic?" asks Mr. Heitland at the very beginning of his preface, and, without definitely proceeding to answer his own question, sets down all the difficulties that stand in the way of doing better than others have done. This becoming diffidence is in some sense a characteristic of the entire work. It is not sufficient to deter the author from adventuring his task, but it is enough to make him walk delicately, where a bolder stride would be at least more dramatically effective. He aims at a frank appreciation and acknowledgment of all those periods in the history of the Republic on which there is clearly not enough evidence extant to enable the judicious student to say definitely, "this is so." Plainly neither the vigorous reconstruction of Mommsen nor the complacent pretentiousness of Ferrero can exert much influence upon him. Such clear and calm English honesty of purpose, showing sturdily along the whole course of the narrative, is one of the charms of the book to the present reviewer's somewhat jaded palate. It goes a considerable way toward making up for some neglect of the arguments of students of special points. Mr. Heitland is frank in acknowledging his disregard of much of this material. "The modern literature," he says in his preface, "is immense, and I have only been able to read a part of it." It must always be a question just how far such an excuse is to be held sufficient by the readers of a history as voluminous in bulk and elaborate in execution as this is. It would clearly not be held sufficient in the case of a writer who should essay to treat of a brief period, or a limited question, in Roman history. But shall a writer who ventures the mightier task of covering in reasonably full detail the whole sweep of the Republic be granted indulgence, if in a hundred places, here and there, he shows no sign of having read, still less of having taken into account, the investigations carried on by less ambitious scholars? A general history of the Roman Republic is, to be sure, something more than an agglomeration of separate studies of a succession of periods, or of a series of topics; but why should its author expect to be pardoned for a deficiency of knowledge in any one of these separate fields? Why essay a task too extended for his powers or his leisure?

The contempt of the Englishman for the meticulous industry of the German unfortunately became proverbial in the last generation. It was too often accompanied by—perhaps generally prompted by—a practical inability to read the German's productions. This inability, and the indifference under

which it shielded itself, are fortunately passing away. Perhaps the present generation may see the need of impressing upon the German the necessity of acquainting himself with what is written in English. Mr. Heitland's reading has by no means been entirely confined to English, but it has apparently been very limited outside of that tongue, not even including some of the better known treatises in French, Italian, and German that do not confine themselves to minute points. Thus on Rome's contact with the East he mentions in his preface as authorities Mahaffy, Mommsen, and Holm (of course accessible in English), but does not refer to Colin's *Rome et la Grèce de 200 à 146 avant Jésus-Christ* (published in 1905), and apparently did not use it. He quotes on the early period Pais, but apparently only from his *Ancient Legends of Roman History* (accessible in English), and not at all from his *Storia di Roma*. It is hardly credible that if he had studied carefully various of the German treatises on topography, his references in these matters should not have shown more trace of their influence. Indeed, Mr. Heitland's disdain of disputed topographical points is carried very far. For example, though his description of the Second Punic War is long and full of detail, the troublesome questions of locality are studiously avoided. No one will get even a hint from Mr. Heitland's otherwise elaborate treatment of where to find anything about Hannibal's passage of the Alps, Trebia, Trasimene, Cannae. "For our purpose it matters not," "the many points in dispute do not concern us"—these are his phrases. They would be more proper in a smaller work. With all charity for difference of view it must appear that so large a book requires at least more bibliographical footnotes or appendices.

On one small but important episode, that of Catiline, Mr. Heitland has read at least some of the modern German *abhandlungen*. He tells us so in his preface (*exceptio probat regulam*) and in his note (§ 1042), and his chapter on Cicero and Catiline is thoroughly tinged by his reading, though it is not clear that he used *La conjuration de Catilina* of Boissier, whom in general, however, he praises justly for the truthfulness of his depictions (§3). Surely it was not impossible for Mr. Heitland to do for every chapter at least as much as he did for the one here cited, and his work would have gained immensely in value by such attention, nor, as this chapter also demonstrates, would the vigor of his treatment have been at all impaired thereby.

The mention of a few points in the earlier part of the work will serve for illustration. Mr. Heitland repeats the old notions about the Septimontium, and the (classical) Subura as a part of it (§ 26). These old notions were new once. But it is difficult to believe that any historian would now so write in the face of Wissowa's *Septimontium und Subura* (published in 1896), to say nothing of other works that have followed. Similar trouble exists in the presentation of many points concerning the early city organization. Surely, by the way, freedmen must be reckoned with as a part of the Roman *familia* (§31), though they came into social prominence only at a relatively late period.

Mr. Heitland asserts (following Maine?) that the family is the basis of Roman society. But somewhere and sometime the present reviewer hopes to find a treatment of early Roman society that emphasizes the easily recognizable fact that the simplest natural group (the family) is not the original social group. It may be an atom, but society deals with molecules as the smallest masses. In the ultimate analysis of the Roman social organism we appear to get back, not to the family at all by itself, but to the family in established combination of life with other families. The nature of that prehistoric institution, the *consilium*, shows this clearly. Even the *patria potestas* (to say nothing of the regal power), without the check of the community through the *consilium*, is a purely imaginary abstraction of the social theorist. Society is working in groups, not in families, as far back as we can trace it. Mr. Heitland, on the other hand, follows the usual course in assuming the family as the unit, and regarding the group as a division of the later total community of families.

It is at least doubtful whether a wrong impression is not conveyed by the statement (§25) that in the early days the hills "stood out more boldly than they do now." In the sketch-map on p. 26 of the first volume the "pseudo-Aventine" is represented erroneously as bounded by a marked declivity on its southeastern side. This is an error that is committed, to be sure, by many maps of the city. "The great size of the Servian Wall and the Cloaca," remarks the author, "point [*sic!*] to large resources and a good supply of labour, which can best be conceived as acting under the pressure of absolute power." Mr. Heitland is doubtless not alone among historians in being apparently ignorant that the so-called Cloaca Maxima is not the only great cloaca in Rome of equally early construction. But it is a more serious error to support an argument about the character of the early government by citing constructions that are surely of much later date. Indeed, Mr. Heitland shows by reference elsewhere that he has at least run across some doubts about both works (I, 29 n., 97 n.). The chapter on "Religion" might have been helped by the study of Wissowa's *Religion und Kultus der Römer*; or if the author had definitely decided not to guide his readers to the greatest works on the subject unless they were written in English, at least Carter's *Religion of Numa* might well have been added to the books cited in the footnote in I, 19. In speaking of coinage (I. 349) Mr. Heitland follows merely Mommsen (as presented in Marquardt's *Staatsverwaltung*), apparently in entire disregard of all the investigations of the last fifty years, in the light of some of which Mommsen himself, indeed, is reported to have changed his views on the early coinage. Botsford's *Roman Assemblies* doubtless appeared too late to be used on the matters of which it treats.

Mr. Heitland does not tell again the pleasant old annalistic stories from the early days of Rome. He assumes them as familiar. But whence, in the name of Niebuhr, should they be familiar to the present generation? Since they have been swept out of the house as rubbishy history, the little books omit them,

as taking too much space, and better left therefore to larger treatises; and now that the larger histories disdain to present them, whence are they to become known? As a fact the present generation of young students shows itself very ill informed about them. Evidently the school library must still keep a copy of Arnold's *History of Rome* on its shelves.

To recur, without further discussion, to Mr. Heitland's primary question, "Is another history—one like this—worth while?" If the question had been asked before the book was actually written, the answer, we fear, ought to have been, "No, unless the field of modern discussion can be better mastered." But now that the book is written, its actual charms are so great that it wins a cordial welcome for itself, like some undesired infant. It is eminently a readable book. It has a straightforward simplicity and manliness of style that kindles and preserves interest, and attracts by its evident sincerity and its instinctive choice of essential aspects for depiction. As a work of final reference it must be used with caution. As a piece of organized historical composition it is most excellent.

E. T. M.

Petrarch's Letters to Classical Authors. Translated from the Latin with a Commentary. By MARIO EMILIO COSENZA. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1910. Pp. xiv+208.

When Ovid published his *Heroides* or "Epistles of Heroines" he aroused the sympathetic interest not alone of his own world but of generations of readers after him. This is due in part to the highly dramatic character of these pieces, but still more to the striking realism produced by an apparently contemporaneous account of far distant times and events by the actual participants in them. By this means a sense of intimacy on the part of the modern reader is established with those who are far removed in space, time, and circumstance.

Petrarch, whose correspondence covered a wide range among the prominent men of his day, was attracted to include among those whom he addressed some of the great men of the far past as well, though from a somewhat different motive. How he fell into this habit of correspondence with the dead he himself explains in his preface:

Cicero, however, exhibits such weakness in his adversity [i.e., as revealed in his letters] that, although I am delighted with his style, I am oftentimes equally offended by his actions. . . . On reading these letters, I am soothed and ruffled at the same time. I could not restrain myself, and, indignation prompting me, I wrote to him as to a friend of my own years and time, regardless of the age which separated us. Indeed, I wrote with a familiarity acquired through an intimate knowledge of the works of his genius, and I pointed out to him what it was that offended me in his writings. This letter served as a precedent. Years later, on re-reading the tragedy entitled *Octavia*, the memory of the letter which I had addressed to Cicero prompted me to write to Seneca also. Thereafter, and as occasion offered, I addressed letters to Varro, Vergil, and others.